

MEMORANDUM

MAY 12, 1988

6

TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND
STEPHEN COYLE, DIRECTOR

FROM: RICARDO A. MILLETT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
JOHN A. BELL, SENIOR PLANNER
NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
JOHN R. LEIGH, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
JAMES F. ENGLISH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
DAVID J. ARMANETTI, SPECIAL ASSISTANT
HARBOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: CHARLESTOWN URBAN RENEWAL AREA (MA. PROJECT R-55)
DISPOSITION PARCEL R-96 (136-142 HIGH STREET)
REQUEST FOR ZONING VARIANCE APPROVAL RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY: Memorandum requesting approval recommendations for Zoning Board of Appeal Petitions (Z1269, Z1270, Z1271, and Z1272) allowing for the rehabilitation of Parcel R-96 (136-142 High Street in Charlestown) into twelve housing units, all of which will be affordable, by the Stahley-Cotter Development Corporation.

As you are aware, Tentative Designation was granted by the Authority on February 11, 1988, to the Stahley-Cotter Development Corporation for the rehabilitation of Parcel R-96 (136-142 High Street in Charlestown) into twelve housing units, all of which will be affordable under current guidelines. The developer has progressed in the development process, and at this time is seeking approval recommendations from the Authority for the zoning variances necessary to complete the project as proposed. The Zoning Board of Appeal hearing date for the project (Petition #'s Z1269, Z1270, Z1271, Z1272) is set for June 21, 1988.

Parcel R-96 consists of four attached wood-frame buildings (totalling 11,748 sf), and is located at the corner of High and Walker Streets (136-142 High Street) in Charlestown (see attached map). The parcel was acquired by the Authority in 1974 from the Real Property Department, after it was taken due to non-payment of taxes, and was formerly occupied as twelve dwelling units. The parcel was previously designated twice (May 1980, and June 1982), but both designations were eventually rescinded, due to market conditions and the inability of the respective developers to perform. In the spring of 1987, a Request for Proposals for the parcel was issued and duly advertised, and four development proposals were received. After four meetings, the proposal of the Stahley-Cotter Development Corporation was selected and endorsed for approval on January 5, 1988, by the Charlestown Neighborhood Council. As previously noted, Tentative Designation of the Stahley-Cotter Development Corporation was granted by the Authority on February 11, 1988.

The developer is proposing to rehabilitate the structures into twelve (12) two-bedroom housing units, all of which will be affordable under current MHFA Guidelines, at a total estimated development cost of \$930,000. The total square footage of the project is proposed at 11,748 sf, with an average square footage of 980 sf per unit. Prices for the units are anticipated to range from \$75,000 to \$105,000, with the average price being \$90,000 per unit. The Authority's Urban Design and Rehabilitation staffs have reviewed and approved the proposed plans for the project.

The only zoning violations in the project, for which zoning variances are now requested, include Excessive Floor Area Ratio (Section 15-1) and Insufficient Rear Yard (Section 20-1). The Excessive Floor Area Ratio (2.8 in a 1.0 zone) is that of the original building, and must be maintained to achieve the unit size desired by the community and the Neighborhood Council. The building has always been set directly on the rear lot line, causing the insufficient rear yard violation, and must remain as such, unless the buildings are to be razed rather than rehabilitated.

Neither zoning variance is deemed by the staff to be detrimental to the neighborhood or the public welfare, and both are in harmony with the general purpose of the zoning code, as well as the character and density of the neighborhood. The neighbors and abutters (including direct and immediate) are in full support of the project and the granting of these variances (see attached letters).

As this proposed project will provide much needed affordable housing to the Charlestown neighborhood, will attractively renovate a blighted and unsafe building, will not be harmful to the neighborhood, is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning code, and has the full support of the abutters, neighbors, and Neighborhood Council; it is therefore recommended that the Authority grant zoning variance approval recommendations on Board of Appeal Petitions Z1269, Z1270, Z1271, and Z1272, for the development proposal of the Stahley-Cotter Development Corporation on Parcel R-96 (136-142 High Street) in Charlestown.

An appropriate vote follows:

VOTED: That approval is recommended for Zoning Board of Appeal Petitions Z1269, Z1270, Z1271, and Z1272, regarding Excessive Floor Area Ratio and Insufficient Rear Yard, allowing the Stahley-Cotter Development Corporation to pursue the rehabilitation of twelve housing units on Parcel R-96 (136-142 High Street in Charlestown.



